

**CHRIST**(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)
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Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Pooja Kalbalia, Registration Number: 2270068, PhD Scholar at the Department of Media Studies, School of Social Sciences, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Monday, 21 September 2026, at 10.30 am in Room No. 044, Ground Floor, R & D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029, Karnataka, India.

Title of the Thesis : **Health Communication Delivered: A Study on Health-Seeking Behaviour of Delivery Professionals in Bengaluru**

Discipline : **Media Studies**

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The members of the Research Advisory Committee of the Scholar, the faculty members of the Department and the School, interested experts and research scholars of all the branches of research are cordially invited to attend this open viva-voce examination.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 03 September 2026

Registrar (Academics)

ABSTRACT

Platform-based gig work has, over the past decade, become one of the fastest-growing forms of labour globally. Post-liberalisation labour markets, cheap data, and a young migrant workforce with few formal employment options have together produced a delivery sector that is large, growing, and almost entirely unprotected. This study is set in Bengaluru and examines the health communication practices, healthcare access, and health-seeking behaviour of platform-based delivery professionals, a workforce that is digitally saturated yet structurally constrained in its capacity to act on available health information. These workers carry smartphones all day. Health content finds them constantly, through WhatsApp forwards, YouTube recommendations, and Google searches done between orders. By the standard assumptions of health communication research, exposure should matter. It does not, or at least not in ways the data can detect. Healthcare visits are deferred. Pharmacies substitute for clinics. Preventive care is essentially absent. A sequential explanatory mixed-method design was adopted, a structured survey of four hundred delivery professionals incorporating the BBC Subjective Well-being Scale, followed by twenty in-depth interviews analysed thematically until saturation. Social media was the primary source of health information for the majority of respondents, yet regression analysis found no significant association between media exposure and healthcare utilisation or well-being. Most had not consulted any provider in the preceding six months; very few did so preventively. Health insurance had no measurable effect on hospitalisation rates. Mean well-being scores were low, with physical health the weakest subscale. The majority were internal migrants managing illness without institutional or familial support. Sen's Capability Approach is what makes sense of this. The gap is not informational. Time poverty, the concrete income-linked cost of every hour away from the platform, made clinical consultation financially irrational regardless of what workers knew. Personal, social, and environmental conversion factors all worked against utilisation together. Communication inequalities were driven by structural conditions of gig employment rather than by information deficits. Constrained agency and adaptive preference together produced capability deprivation, a condition that paid sick leave, redesigned insurance, and platform accountability must begin to address.

Keywords: *Health communication; Gig economy; Delivery workers; Health-seeking behaviour; Capability Approach; Time poverty; Communication inequalities; Constrained agency; Capability deprivation; Conversion factors. AbstractAbstractDetailsAbstract*

Publications:

1. **Kalbalia, P., & Koushik, K. (2026).** Gig Economy Delivery Workers: Navigating Health, Well-Being, and Job Stability. In *Reimagining Human Resources for Inclusive and Sustainable Development* (pp. 200-212). Routledge.10.4324/9781003735168-18
2. **Kalbalia, P., & Koushik, K. (2025).** Health Communication as Capability: Gig Workers' Freedoms Through Sen's Approach. *Howard Journal of Communications*, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10646175.2025.2570753>
3. **Kalbalia, P., & Koushik, K. (2025).** Driving Better Health Outcomes for Gig Workers Through Strategic Health Initiatives. In *Immersive Technology for the Gig Economy: Transformative Business Practices* (pp.323-346). IGI Global Scientific Publishing. <http://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3373-1290-3.ch012>
4. **Kalbalia, P., & Koushik, K. (2025).** Regulating the Gig Economy: Addressing Worker Rights in India's Quick Commerce Sector. In *Sustainability and Adaptability of Gig Economies in Global Business* (pp. 85-106). IGI Global Scientific Publishing. <http://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-9385-7.ch004>
5. **Kalbalia, P., Nath, N.J., Haneefa, K.V. (2024).** Utilisation and Accessibility of Healthcare Services Among Gig Workers: A Systematic Review. In: Alam, A., Rukhsana, Biswas, S., Islam, N., Roy, R. (eds) *Population, Environment and Disease*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-67624-6_5